

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0206
DAVID LENT/BEIPUT

FEBRUARY 20, 1976

CAN LEBANON BOUNCE BACK?
(VOICED VERSION WITH INSERTS AVAILABLE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR:

AFTER TEN MONTHS OF CIVIL WAR, LEBANON FACES A VAST RECONSTRUCTION JOB THAT WILL TAKE YEARS TO COMPLETE. V-O-A'S DAVID LENT REPORTS FROM BEIRUT.

VOICE:

LEBANON'S CZAR OF RECONSTRUCTION -- INDUSTRY AND TOURISM MINISTER GHASSAN TUENI -- SAYS THE EFFORTS TO REBUILD FROM THE RAVAGES OF CIVIL WAR HAVE BEGUN.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- TUENI

"I WOULD SAY THAT THIS COUNTRY WILL BE BACK ON ITS FEET WITHIN A MONTH OR TWO IF WE HAVE A MONTH OR TWO OF REAL PEACE AND SECURITY. MAYBE WE WILL GET GOING IN A MONTH OR TWO, BUT TOTAL RECONSTRUCTION WILL TAKE NO LESS THAN TWO YEARS."

VOICE:

MINISTER TUENI SAYS THE POVERTY AREAS ENCIRCLING BEIRUT HAVE BEEN FIFTY PER CENT DESTROYED, TEN TO FIFTEEN PERCENT OF LEBANON'S TOWNS AND VILLAGES ARE IN RUIN, AND NO FEWER THAN FIFTY FactORIES HAVE BEEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY DESTROYED. THE MINISTER SAYS IT WILL COST TWO HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS ALONE TO REBUILD THE FactORIES. HE SAYS THE MARKET PLACES OF CENTRAL BEIRUT AND TRIPOLI HAVE BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED. LEBANON, MINISTER TUENI SAYS, WILL RESORT FIRST TO ITS OWN FINANCIAL MEANS TO BEGIN RECONSTRUCTION; LATER, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF GRANTS AND LOANS WILL BE WELCOME. THE TASK OF RECONSTRUCTION IS SO ENORMOUS THAT MINISTER TUENI BELIEVES LEBANON'S TRADITIONAL ADHERENCE TO A STRICTLY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ECONOMY WILL HAVE TO BE ABANDONED.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- TUENI

"I THINK THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CHANGE TO A CERTAIN DEGREE THE ASPECT OF THE LEBANESE ECONOMY. I THINK THERE SHOULD BE AN INTERVENTION OF THE PUBLIC SECTORS, IN CERTAIN FIELDS TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENTS ARE NEEDED -- IN TOURISM AGAIN AND IN SOME SECTORS OF THE INDUSTRY."

VOICE:

MISTER TUENI BELIEVES LEBANON WILL BE ABLE TO RESUME ITS ROLE AS A BANKING, COMMERCIAL, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION CENTER FOR THE ARAB WORLD.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- TUENI

"I THINK THAT BUSINESS WILL COME BACK, GIVEN TWO THINGS: FIRST, IF WE ARE ABLE TO RE-CREATE THE ECONOMIC AMBIANCE THAT WAS LEBANON'S POSITION, LEBANON'S SOURCE OF WEALTH AND SECONDLY IF WE CREATE AGAIN AN IMAGE OF SECURITY WHICH IS NOT A MATTER OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, BUT RATHER OF REAL HARD FACT."

VOICE:

MISTER TUENI SAYS SEVERAL WEEKS WILL PASS BEFORE IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT SECURITY IS WELL UNDER CONTROL. BUT HE SAYS A GOOD START TOWARD REVIVING THE ECONOMY HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE.

GH/RCS